

Charles Fernald House
412 West Montecito Street
Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County
California

HABS No. CAL-240

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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CHARLES FERNALD HOUSE

412 West Montecito Street
Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, California

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REPORT

Prepared by David Gebhard, August 1965

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Jack E. Boucher, Photographer, October 1960

WEST AND SOUTH ELEVATIONS
DETAIL OF GABLE (South Elevation)
DETAIL OF ENTRANCE (West Elevation)
STAIR HALL - FIRST FLOOR
DETAIL OF STAIR & NEWEL POST
LIVING ROOM FIREPLACE (South Wall)
DINING ROOM (West Wall)
DINING ROOM FIREPLACE (North Wall)
BED ROOM (South Wall)
DETAIL OF BED ROOM FIREPLACE (South Wall)

SKETCH OF PLAN by David Gebhard, July 29, 1965
SKETCH OF PLAT by David Gebhard, August 6, 1965

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Part I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Name: Charles Fernald House
- B. Location: 412 West Montecito Street
Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, Calif.
- C. Present owner: Santa Barbara Historical Society
Santa Barbara, California
- D. Present Occupant: Santa Barbara Historical Society
- E. Present use: Historical house, open to the public.
- F. Brief Statement of Significance: A nineteenth century Queen Anne house, with a "Gothic" flavor. This house was built for Judge Charles Fernald, a leading legal and political figure in late nineteenth century Southern California society.
- G. Physical History:
1. Original and subsequent owners: Charles Fernald from 1863-1887; Hannah H. Fernald, from 1887-1917; Florence Fernald from 1917-1958; Santa Barbara Historical Society, 1958- present.
 2. Date of erection: 1862.
 3. Architect: Credited to Roswell Forbush, an American cabinet maker who came to Santa Barbara before 1850. Forbush practiced in Santa Barbara as both a contractor-carpenter and as a cabinet maker.
 4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None known.
 5. Notes on alterations and additions: The original house of 1862 was a two story 30' square brick structure. The building was covered by a medium pitched hipped roof; a single story porch ran across the front of the house, a second single story porch ran across the south side of the house, and a wood lean-to kitchen was at the rear. The original plan of the house is almost entirely obscured by later remodeling, but it would seem that it consisted of a hall to the south side and a parlor living room, connected by a wide opening to dining room to the rear. The kitchen was housed in a wood wing attached to the east side of the brick mass. Upstairs there were two bedrooms along the north side, and a hall along all or part of the south side. This

conjectural reconstruction of the original house is supported by an 1877 drawing of the house and by the evidence of the structure itself (see attached plan.). The original house occupied the area of the present music room (without the north addition and the west bay window; the entry hall, without projecting vestibule(?); the passage to the rear of the entrance hall and apparently part of the present dining room. (Note how the original brick wall projects out 7' 0" between the dining room and the pantry). Whether the curved stair case as it now exists was designed at the time of the original house is open to question.

Around 1880 the house was completely remodeled and enlarged. The remodeling has been credited to both Thomas Nixon, a local architect-contractor, and also to the architect Peter J. Barber. The general style of the house and much of its specific exterior detailing is quite similar to buildings which are authenticated as having been designed by Nixon. The closest existing Nixon designed house would be the George Sexton Edwards house, built in 1887 (located at 1721 Santa Barbara Street). Regrettably little information has been recorded about Thomas Nixon. In an article on him (Santa Barbara New Press, March 20, 1949), it stated that he was an architect builder and mill owner and that he died in the "mid 1920's." This same article also lists a number of his houses and other buildings, most of which are no longer in existence.

The remodeling of ca. 1880 was in fact a complete rebuilding, with the exterior and interior of the house being fully changed. On the south side of the house a library, dining room and porch were added. An angled entrance vestibule was added to the front entry; while the two rooms at the west side of the house were thrown together to form a single room. A bay with seat was projected off the new enlarge living room. The service area and kitchen to the rear of the house were also remodeled; with the present arrangement of pantry, storage and kitchen being realized at this time.

On the second floor two new bedrooms were added, one over the first floor library, the other over the dining room. A second servant's room, etc. was placed over the kitchen. The roof was also completely rebuilt at the time of this remodeling. The old low pitched hipped roof was replaced by a steeply pitched series of gable roofs, with elaborate sawed and turned wood work in the gable ends, pinnacles projecting from each of the gable ends, originally a scalloped mental roof ridge, and typically high, narrow panelled Queen Anne chimneys.

The character of the house, after this remodeling can be seen by consulting a perspective drawing of the house on the borders of the ca. 1887 panoramic view of Santa Barbara.

Several later changes were made to the structure. A bath and closet, together with a horizontal row of three windows was added between the southwest and southeast bedrooms. The living room (now called the Music room) was enlarged by adding 6' 3" to its north side. There were undoubtedly some changes made at this time in the rear service wing for the ca. 1887 view of the house does not show the present single story wing off the east side of the kitchen. As late as the 1920's two French doors were placed in the south dining room bay, a wood decked pergola was built onto the north side of the living room and a downstairs bath was provided at the northeast corner of the house.

The house originally stood within a landscaped single block at 422 Santa Barbra Street. The house faced west, and the property was surrounded by a low cast iron fence. In August, 1959 the brick walls of the house were removed and replaced by wood studding, and the house was cut into three parts and moved to its present Montecito location. Charles Whitaker of Santa Barbara was in general charge of moving and restoring the house. It was moved by Frank Villalba, a Santa Barbara house mover. At its new site it was oriented in the same direction as at its original site (facing west); a new foundation was provided, and other minor changes were made. The fire places were all rebuilt and are no longer operative.

6. Important old views:

- a. Pencil drawing of west and south side of original brick house, dated November 24, 1877 and signed "E.C." collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.
- b. View of house from south, Panoramic view of Santa Barbara, published ca. 1887, Santa Barbara.
- c. View of south side of house, etching by Henry Chapman Ford in 36 Etchings by Henry Chapman Ford, selected and published by Edward Seldon Spaulding, Santa Barbara Historical Society.

- d. Photograph of house published to accompany article "The Fernald House. . . Historical Document," Santa Barbara News Press, February 6, 1949.

7. Historical Events connected with house:

Judge Charles Fernald's life (1830-1892) in this house is discussed in Cameron Rogers' A Country Judge in Arcady, Glendale, 1954. According to information supplied by the Santa Barbara Historical Society " Judge Charles Fernald was born in North Berwick, Maine on May 27, 1830. He came to California when less than nineteen years of age, arriving in San Francisco on June 14, 1849. After a few months in the mining camps he returned to San Francisco, where he was employed by the Post and Alta, leading publications of that time, and at the same time continued his law studies.

In 1852 Charles Fernald decided to return to New England, and on his way home he stopped off in Santa Barbara to visit friends. At that time Santa Barbara was being terrorized by an organized gang of bandits, which caused many of the county officials to resign. He was offered the position of sheriff, which he accepted, and remained in Santa Barbara. He later served as district attorney and was elected county judge three consecutive terms. In 1881 Judge Fernald was elected Mayor of Santa Barbara. He also carried on an active law practice and was admitted to practice in the State Supreme Court and in the Supreme Court of the United States.

On August 7, 1862, Judge Fernald returned to North Berwick, Maine to marry Miss Hobbs. They returned to Santa Barbara and later in that year he built this house for his bride.

Five children were born to Judge and Mrs. Fernald. They were - Beatrice (who married Robert Cameron Rogers), Edith (who died at the age of 7 years), Florence, Charles, Jr., and Reginald. Miss Florence lived in the family home until her death at the age of 91.

8. References:

a. The house and Charles Fernald

Fernald, Charles, Papers, at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Los Angeles Times, July 20, 1959.

Rogers, Cameron, A Country Judge in Arcady.

The Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale, Calif., 1954.

Santa Barbara News Press

February 6, 1949

January 18, 1959

February 1, 1959

March 5, 1959

May 21, 1959

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August 25, 1959

August 26, 1959

January 11, 1960

July 10, 1960

Spaulding, Edward Seldon, 36 Etchings by Henry Chapman Ford. Selected and published by the author. Santa Barbara Historical Society, Santa Barbara.

Storke, Mrs. Yda Addis, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties, Lewis Publishing Co., Chicago, 1891, pp. 674-677.

Thompson and West, History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, California.

Originally published in Oakland, 1883; republished by Howell-North, Berkeley, 1961, pp. 35-36.

b. Thomas Nixon

Kroll, Francis Cooper, Memories of Rancho Santa Rosa and Santa Barbara. Santa Barbara Historical Society, Santa Barbara, n.d.
Santa Barbara News Press

March 20, 1949

July 28, 1963

David Gebhard
August 4, 1965

Part II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

- A. Name: Charles Fernald House
Address: 412 Montecito Street
Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, California
- B. Number of stories: two
- C. Type of wall construction: Original house-brick (wood kitchen); later additions wood.
- D. Layout: Original house: side hall plan with rear lean-to kitchen
Remodeled house: Central hall plan.
- E. General Statement: Architectural interest and merit.
The 1880 remodeling of this house produced an elaborately detailed Queen Anne house. The wood detailing both within and without represents a highly original version of Queen Anne decoration.
- F. General Statement: Condition of Fabric.
In good condition, considering its age and the fact that it was cut into three parts and moved to its present site.
- G. Detailed Description-- General
(see Part I, G, 5) for description of the sequence of remodelings and additions to the original house. See also accompanying plan.
- H. Overall Dimensions (see attached plan)
Original house: Front (west side) 30' 9"; sides 30' 9"
Dimensions of kitchen wing unknown.
Present house: Front(west side) 51' 0"; side 37' 6"
Rear service wing: two story section:
east side 20' 0"; north and south sides 13' 1"; one story section:
east side 20' 0"; north and south sides 19' 2"
South porch 6' 6" wide
North Pergola 9' 9" x 28' 9"
- I. Foundation: Original, cut stone foundation: Basement described in 1949(Santa Barbara News Press, February 6, 1949) as " . . . deep, wide and lined with native stone." Cut stone was also used for the ca. 1880 addition, although only a crawl space was provided under all of the new addition to the house.
A poured reinforced footing and concrete block foundation was provided when the house was moved to its present site on Montecito Street.
- J. Wall Construction:
Original house: 12" thick solid brick wall, lime plastered on inside, red brick left exposed on exterior.
Ca. 1880 remodeling: wood stud construction; lime plaster and some wood paneling, interior; exterior

covered with smooth tongue and groove horizontal boards. These were painted with a sand paint to imitate stucco. The old brick section of the house was stuccoed over and painted.

K. Porches, Stoops:

Original house: two porches running along front (west side) and the south side of house; front porch with half-hipped roof, central gable; south porch with half-hipped roof.

Ca. 1880 remodeling: South dining porch: five sided porch; tongue and groove wood floored, four rectangular wood paneled piers support a flat roof deck which is surrounded on five sides by a wood railing.

Added ca. 1925: North pergola; tongue and groove wood floor; partially surrounded by railing; four undecorated posts support lintel, which in its turn supports 15 exposed rafters.

Service porch off north side of service wing: probably contemporary with one story addition to service wing. Front stoop: modern.

L. Chimneys: Original house: two chimneys, large in scale may be seen in the 1877 drawing of the house.

Ca. 1880 remodeling: One narrow, high chimney may be seen in the ca. 1887 view of the house. Present: either partially or completely rebuilt.

M. Openings: Doorways and doors: The projecting front vestibule with its angular paneled wide door and leaded colored glass transome are most likely a product of the ca. 1880 remodeling; although the angular bay itself may have been part of the original 1862 house. The glass doors which lead from the dining room to the south porch are certainly 20th century, as are the pair of glass doors which lead from the music room to the north pergola.

N. Openings: Windows and shutters.

Original house: Windows appear to be double hung windows with one horizontal and one vertical bar per sash.

Ca. 1880 remodeling: All major windows, double hung, single panes of glass in each section. Small windows in west living room bay, single pane, fixed. In a characteristic Queen Anne fashion, a number of the windows are grouped together with lower wood panels and upper paneled entablature and cornice.

O. Roof: Shape, covering.

Original house: Medium pitched hip roof; probably covered with shingles.

Ca. 1880 remodeling: Central high pitched gable roof; off which project four similar high pitched gable roofs; lower pitched gable roof covered two story kitchen wing;

flat roof over south porch; all covered with wood shingles.

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P. Roof: Cornice, eaves.

Original house: Eaves appear boxed; both on main roof and on the eaves of the two porches.

Ca. 1880 remodeling: eaves boxed in ; supported by small wood bracketts; elaborate cross and vertical beam and sawed wood ornament, plus pinnacle provided in each gable end.

Q. Roof: Dormers, Cupolas: none

R. Floor plan: (see attached floor plan)
(Present House)

First floor: Central Entry Hall 12' 6" x 15' 3"
Music room (to north) 17' 11" x 28' 0"
Library (to south of hall)
15' 6" x 26' 0"
Dining Room (to south of rear passage
and east of library) 13' 8" x 26' 6"

Second floor: Central stair hall 12' 6" x 13' 11"
Northwest bedroom 12' 6" x 15' 11"
Northeast bedroom 12' 6" x 12' 3"
Southwest bedroom 15' 2" x 16' 11"
Southeast bedroom 14' 0" x 26' 6"

S. Stairways:

Main stairway: "L" shaped, curved at corner of "L" 16 steps; 8" risers, 9" treads. Carved railing supported by angular and lathed balusters; heavy, elaborate newel post at base. Similar rail and baluster around stair opening on second floor.

Rear stairway: (off kitchen) Curved "U" shaped stairway; 17 steps, 7" risers, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " tread.

T. Flooring: Original house: unknown

Ca. 1880 remodeling: Complicated oak parquet flooring in principal first floor rooms; rest of house 1" x 6" tongue and groove soft wood flooring.

U. Wall and Ceiling Finish: Lime plaster on brick (original section of house) and on wood lath in later section of house. Wood wainscoting (painted) paneled in hall and dining room. Ceilings all lime plaster on wood lath.

V. Interior doorways and doors: All of the interior door trim and the doors would appear to be a product of the ca. 1880 remodeling. The double sliding doors separating the library and the dining room, the dining room doors to the central passageway, etc. contain an interesting zigzag molding at top of the upper and lower panels.

- W. Interior trim: A zigzag pattern was used very often throughout the house on doors, wainscoting, etc. Wood cornices were used in the dining room, library and music rooms and in several of the upstairs rooms.
- X. Hardware: With the exception of the exterior glass doors in the music room and the dining room, and several of the doors in the service wing, the remaining doors, locks, handles and butt hinges would appear to date from the ca. 1880 remodeling.
- Y. Lighting: It is recorded that because of the fear of fire upon the part of the Fernalds that candles were used in the house during the 19th century (Santa Barbara News Press, February 6, 1949).
- Z. Heating: There are four fire places in the present house; those in the dining room and in two of the upstairs bedrooms must date from the ca. 1880 remodeling. A fireplace was provided for the library in the ca. 1880 remodeling, but the design of the present fireplace which is quite "Craftsman" is similar in style to the Craftsman-like pergola on the north side of the house. Both probably date from ca. 1925.
- AA. Site-General.
Original site: an entire city block, bounded by Santa Barbara Street, Haley Street, Garden Street and Gutierrez Street.
- BB. Orientation:
Original site: house faced west: At the front of the house there was a flat raised earth terrace four steps above the surrounding ground level. The walks to the house, approached from Santa Barbara Street, running on the north and the south side of the earth terrace, ca. 10' from the west side of house, the walks turned at right angles, ascended four steps which led to the upper walk. The steps of the entrance stoop were at right angles to this upper walk. The yard and garden of the Fernald house were famous for the variety and the quality of its plantings.
- CC. Enclosures: Low iron fence around street side of property (probably the result of the ca. 1880 remodeling).
- DD. Out buildings: None presently known.
- EE. Walks and drive ways (see BB)
- FF. Landscaping: Original site (see BB; and ca. 1887 drawing of south elevation of house).

David Gebhard
August 4, 1965

APPROVED:

Charles S. Pope
Charles S. Pope, AIA

DATE: *Sept 2, 1965*